

REMARKS

Responsive to the Office Action of September 24, to which response is due by September 24, 2004, Applicant submits the foregoing Amendments to the claims.

The Office Action, paragraphs 3-7, rejects all of the pending claims under 35 USC 102 (b) and 103(a) citing the aforementioned Tsai, Hermann, Dean, and Pursell.

Although Applicant disagrees with the Examiner's position with respect to the rejections expressed in the Office Action, in order to expedite prosecution of this application, Applicant has amended all of the claims to further distinguish the claimed invention from the cited references.

More specifically, Applicant has amended the broadest Claims 1, 2 and 3 and those dependant thereon, to clearly indicate that when opening the device and, for example, the plunger is pushed into the sleeve, *the distal end of the plunger compresses the spring member*, and after rotation to align the key and keyway, *the spring biases the plunger out of the sleeve* for easy removal. None of the cited references, taken either alone or in combination with each other, teach or suggest such amended claims.

Neither Dean or Pursell teach or suggest any spring within their locking devices.

The spring device in Hermann (133, Col. 6, lines 59-col. 7, line 14; Note: 139 should probably be 133) does not function to *bias a plunger to lock a key onto the bottom surface of a lip* nor does it *bias the plunger out of the sleeve*. The primary function of the spring in Hermann, as indicated in the referenced section in Hermann is to maintain sleeve 131 in position for threading when not threaded onto rod 115. This function is not in any manner similar to the functions of the spring in Applicant's device.

The spring device in Tsai (14, Col. 4, line 8-16) serves a similar function, i.e., keeping the inner workings of the sleeve together. The spring device in Tsai does not in any manner function to *bias a plunger to lock a key onto the bottom surface of a lip* nor does it *bias the plunger out of the sleeve*.

For all of the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully asserts that all of the claims now presented are allowable and requests that this application pass to allowance.

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Respectfully Submitted,

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